

PROJECT MANAGER PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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Abstract

The development of soft skills associated with the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) area of communication management is essential to effective project management and is difficult to completely develop and assess in an academic environment, such as The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Master of Science in Project Management (MSPM) program. This is especially important as project management trends towards Agile, which identifies project managers as “servant leaders,” requiring an emphasis on such interpersonal leadership. Research and analysis of program and non-program stakeholders supported the project and hypothesis. This project resulted in a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan*, which provides a systematic approach for developing a measurable plan catered to individual project manager’s maturing communication soft skill areas. Phase one of this project included three project status briefs, a complete project management plan, and final out-brief before execution of phase two, which included three project status briefs, delivery of the *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* to the client, final project report, and final out-brief following project closure. In conclusion, it is recommended that UAA MSPM students use this plan to develop these often immature but highly important skills which do not receive a targeted focus in the program.

Key Words:

Soft skills
Emotional intelligence
Personal improvement
Self-analysis
Personality baseline
Personal development

Hypothesis

The University of Alaska Anchorage Master of Science in Project Management program, its students, as well as project managers in general, could benefit from more focus on the cultivation of the soft skills and emotional intelligence necessary to develop optimal leadership skills in the Project Management Body of Knowledge area of communication management. This hypothesis underwent research and analysis involving program faculty leaders, graduates of the program, project managers who did not go through the program, current students, and a subject matter expert (SME). The recommendation identified early on was for UAA MSPM students to use the final product, a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan*, to develop these often deficient but highly important skills which are difficult to develop and assess academically.

Needs Identification

Personal Experience

It was identified through personal experience that other programs, such as the UAA College of Business and Public Policy's Business Administration and Management program, had more of a focus on soft skills than the UAA College of Engineering's MSPM program. In the UAA College of Business and Public Policy's Business Administration and Management program, students are required to take numerous baseline personality, soft skill, and emotional intelligence assessments in order to identify their personal areas of deficiencies, improve, and become more effective managers and leaders. Students study Myers Briggs, Maslow's Hierarchy, and other soft skill (and psychological) instruments to better understand themselves and others in order to more effectively work in a team and drive stakeholders.

It was surprising to find that the MSPM program did not have a targeted softs skill focus such as this. This is especially true as it became apparent that these mature soft skills and psychological understandings are imperative to effective leadership and especially key PMBOK knowledge areas such as communication, stakeholder, and human resource management. Early in the MSPM program, students are taught that, according to the Project Management Institute (PMI), project managers spend 90% of their time communicating and that it is one of the top reasons

project's fail (Discenza, 2007). However, no clear tools or resources were provided by the program to target the soft skills involved. It was identified that MSPM students would often self-identify or be identified by faculty to be deficient in communication soft skills (giving presentations, audience analysis, etc.).

It is apparent that experience is often looked to as the remedy for soft skill deficiency. "That will come with experience," is a phrase often used or heard in regard to softer skills or emotional intelligence. This is no consolation for individuals who have been a full-time student for a long time and have yet to gain much experience in the field; such individuals launching their career in a direct role in project management can't afford to wait to gain long-term experience to become proficient in soft skills. This personal experience initially contributed to the need's identification for a soft skill improvement tool, and as preliminary project research and analysis began via discussion with stakeholders, the need was further solidified.

Subject Matter Expertise

In order to expand upon the initial need identification born from personal experience and observation, discussion of soft skills and their role in effective project management was initiated with a subject matter expert, Jim Bates. Bates is a MSPM professor, LSS Black Belt, Agile expert, etc. and was able to assist in reinforcing this project's needs identification. It was clear he was especially excited about the project's alignment with the Project Management Institute's Project Management Body of Knowledge and changes to the upcoming seventh edition, which Bates had early access to as the President of the PMI Alaska Chapter. The PMBOK is cornerstone to the MSPM program and used in every class to teach basic principles and best practice. Bates initially shared this trend toward servant leadership and soft skills, and further research and analysis was conducted, detailed in the "Project Management Institute and The Project Management Body of Knowledge Seventh Edition" section below.

Additionally, Bates could attest to deficiency of soft skills which are associated with experience in the field (giving presentations, being direct, etc.), as he has experience sponsoring project management internships, often given to students with less experience, through the program. He

has had the opportunity to evaluate soft skills first-hand in the classroom as well as in the real-world environment.

The project's preliminary needs identification was also discussed with core MSPM faculty, LuAnn Piccard and Roger Hull. Both professors supported this identified lack of soft skill focus within the program and openly welcomed the constructive criticism. Both stakeholders have been unflinchingly supportive and welcoming of improvements over the course of the project – pointing to their own soft skill maturity.

Project Management Institute and The Project Management Body of Knowledge 7th Edition

The PMI announced the PMBOK seventh edition exposure draft in January 2020 for review by the project management community (Master of Project Academy, n.d.). It references project management's trend towards and incorporation of Agile, which identifies project managers as "servant leaders," requiring an emphasis on interpersonal leadership. Additionally, the seventh version of PMBOK, estimated release in May of 2021, will be principle-based rather than the traditional process-based standard. Exhibit 1 illustrates the change to a principle-based standard in the seventh edition from the process-based sixth edition.

PMBOK® 6th Edition	PMBOK® 7th Edition
5 Process Groups	12 Project Principles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiating 2. Planning 3. Executing 4. Monitoring and Controlling 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be a diligent, respectful, and caring steward 2. Build a culture of accountability and respect 3. Engage stakeholders to understand their interests and needs 4. Focus on value 5. Recognize and respond to systems' interactions 6. Motivate, influence, coach, and learn 7. Tailor the delivery approach based on context 8. Build quality into processes and results 9. Address complexity using knowledge, experience, and learning 10. Address opportunities and threats 11. Be adaptable and resilient 12. Enable change to achieve the envisioned future state
<p align="center">Comparison of 6th and 7th Editions of the PMBOK® Guide 2: 12 Principles will replace the 5 Process Groups</p>	

Exhibit 1 Changes for PMBOK 7th Edition

One PMI presenter on the topic detailed, “instead of explaining the project management processes (and related activities) that are probably needed for the project, it can describe the most effective way of carrying out activities. This approach can benefit anyone who’s leading a project, regardless of the delivery method, management methodology, etc. (Lynch, 2020).” This focus on the most effective way to conduct oneself or carry out an activity points to soft skills. Additionally, these new principles focus largely on the soft skills and emotional intelligence targeted in the product of the project. For example, some of the new foundational principles include:

Stewardship: be a diligent, respectful, and caring steward

Team: build a culture of accountability and respect

Leadership: motivate, influence, coach, and learn

Adaptability & Resilience be adaptable and resilient

The PMBOK seventh edition has been marketed as the “dawn of a new era” (Education Edge, 2020). It is clear that programs, students, and projects managers need to adapt to this new soft standard of project management in order to grow and thrive with the body of knowledge and industry. The product of this project will aide in that journey.

The Contribution to The Project Management Body of Knowledge

Another key component of the initial needs identification for this project was the product’s contribution to the Project Management Body of Knowledge. A preliminary requirement of the project (and the UAA MSPM capstone) was to leave something behind that could be further developed and that other project managers could benefit from. A *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* contributes to the overall Project Management Body of Knowledge through the research and analysis of deficient skills creating new knowledge and the production of a subsequent tool, the *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan*, for remedy and improvement that can be used by the UAA MSPM program and project managers in general. Encouraging appropriate and honest self-analysis and active improvement fosters the essence of continuous improvement championed by PMBOK. Additionally, the product was designed with the opportunity for expansion in mind, especially in respect to other soft skills or the PMBOK knowledge areas. This recommended development in detailed in a later section, “Opportunities and Future Development.”

Research and Analysis

Research Sources

	Type	Designation	Role	Method	Analysis of Results
Research Sources	Human Subject	James Bates	SME/PMI AK Chapter President	Interview	Thematic analysis
	Human Subject	LuAnn Piccard	MSPM Department	Interview	Thematic analysis

			Chair/PMI Board of Directors		
	Human Subject	Roger Hull	MSPM Faculty	Interview	Thematic analysis
	Human Subject	MSPM Students	Internal Stakeholder/End-User	Survey	Descriptive data analysis
	Human Subject	MSPM Graduates	External Stakeholder	Survey	Descriptive data analysis
	Human Subject	Project Management Professionals (PMI AK Chapter Members)	SMEs	Survey	Descriptive data analysis
	Resource	Personal Improvement Tools/Resources	To be assessed and compiled for use in final product	ORM/SME Direction/SDA	Qualitative analysis
	Literature	Existing Personal Improvement Plans/Templates	To be reviewed and used as lessons learned and guide in creation of final product	ORM/SDA	Qualitative analysis
	Resource	Personality Baseline Assessments	To be assessed and compiled for use in final product	ORM/SME Direction	Qualitative analysis
ORM = Online Research Method SME = Subject Matter Expert SDA = Secondary Data Analysis					

Exhibit 2 Research Source Summary

Approaches and Instruments

A summary of research sources is detailed above in Exhibit 2. The approach to conducting research for this project consisted of various instruments in order to derive well-rounded and diverse data. The research methods included conducting interviews with lead stakeholders, distributing surveys to stakeholders, product end-users, and subject matter experts, and reviewing existing literature and resources through online research and secondary data analysis. Research approaches and instruments for this project were approved by the primary faculty advisor (Appendix A).

Survey

The methodology for survey research was to distribute questions regarding the subject of this project to stakeholders and end-users through the University of Alaska Anchorage's survey system, Qualtrics (see Appendix C). The survey targeted two demographics: UAA MSPM students or graduates and project management professionals. The survey was distributed to all current MSPM students and to the membership of the Project Management Institute Alaska Chapter. The rationale for this survey methodology was to gather data from both kinds of end-users (students and project managers in general) and receive well-rounded requirements and critical success factors to ensure a quality project product.

Survey Preamble:

"The purpose of this survey is to collect data regarding the deficiencies that exist in general project management and within the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) College of Engineering Master of Science in Project Management (MSPM) program in regard to the soft skills and emotional intelligence related to effective leadership. The data gathered from this survey will be used to develop a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* for the students of the UAA MSPM program and project managers in general. This product will provide a systematic approach for developing a measurable plan for improving soft skills in the PMBOK knowledge area of communication management. This research will be utilized to produce a tool which contributes to the overall Project Management Body of Knowledge by providing project managers a guided, personalized approach for developing their soft skills and emotional

intelligence on their own time and at their own pace as project management continually trends toward a softer-standard.

- This survey is voluntary
- No personally identifiable information will be collected in this survey
- The data gathered is confidential and will be used solely for the project detailed above”

Interviews

Interviews were conducted in an unconstructed manner. No interview protocol was required; however, a preamble was provided to the interviewee before time of interview and consent to continue obtained. The rationale for this type of unconstructed research was for the project manager to have open and honest discourse about the existing immaturities in the UAA College of Engineering MSPM program and experience/testimony relating to both students and the individual. This structure provided the most applicable information for this kind of project. Interviews were conducted with the following major stakeholders and subject matter experts:

LuAnn Piccard – MSPM Department Chair / PMI Board of Directors

Roger Hull – MSPM Professor

Jim Bates – MSPM Professor / LSS Black Belt / PMI AK Chapter President

Interview Preamble:

“The purpose of this interview is to collect data regarding the deficiencies that exist in general project management and within the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) College of Engineering Master of Science in Project Management (MSPM) program in regard to the soft skills and emotional intelligence related to effective leadership. The data gathered from this interview will be used to develop a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* for the students of the UAA MSPM program and project managers in general. This product will provide a systematic approach for developing a measurable plan for improving soft skills in the PMBOK knowledge area of communication management. This research will be utilized to produce a tool which contributes to the overall Project Management Body of Knowledge by providing project managers a guided, personalized approach for developing their soft skills and emotional intelligence on their own time and at their own pace as project management continually trends toward a softer-standard.”

Literature

The research of existing literature and resources was conducted by online research methodology (ORM) and secondary data analysis (SDA), including guidance and references from subject matter experts. Skill baselines, existing personal improvement plans, as well as development tools and resources were the subject of research, and the most applicable to communication management included in the final product – considering scope. The purpose of this research methodology was to identify and provide a concise guide consisting of the most applicable and helpful information which can be catered in a plan, not to identify and provide an exhaustive repository of development resources; that is an opportunity for future development.

Analysis of Results

The interviews conducted in this project were unstructured, and therefore their data was not directly compared. Interview data was shaped into valuable outcomes through note taking, critical thinking, thematic and qualitative analysis which does not require an interview transcript or protocol. The results of the surveys were compiled in a report through Qualtrics and underwent descriptive thematic analysis. This analysis provided the most common themes which were shaped into critical requirements for the end product. Literature research was unstructured and processed into useable information through note taking, qualitative analysis, and direction from the project's subject matter experts and sponsor. Research analysis was approved by the primary faculty advisor (Appendix A).

Results and Key Supporting Themes

For complete research results and raw data, please see the attached appendix of research results (Appendix C). For a concise view of subsequent requirements traceability, see the updated Requirements Traceability Matrix (Appendix B) for research data transformation into project requirements and traceable WBS satisfaction.

Survey

The survey of UAA's MSPM students, as well as members of the local PMI Alaska Chapter received 36 responses. About 64% of responses came from project management professionals who did not go through UAA's MSPM program (PMI Alaska Chapter membership). The final product, a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan*, is recommended for UAA MSPM students but can be used by any project manager. As such, this response category was not favorable but beneficial none the less.

Key themes which supported this project's hypothesis were identified through analysis of survey results. Namely, the survey revealed that 66% of the sample population believed most project managers do **not** have adequate soft skills for effective project management. Additionally, 100% indicated that they valued self-improvement plans and 90% actively worked on self-improvement. This supports the identified soft skill immaturity and need for a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan*.

When the scope of the project was reduced due to risk realization (Appendix B), discussed in a later section "Product and Project Management," the knowledge area of communication management was retained, and human resource and stakeholder management were excluded from scope. This decision was predicated upon survey responses, detailed in Exhibit 3, which identified communication management as the most deficient skill out of the three in the field.

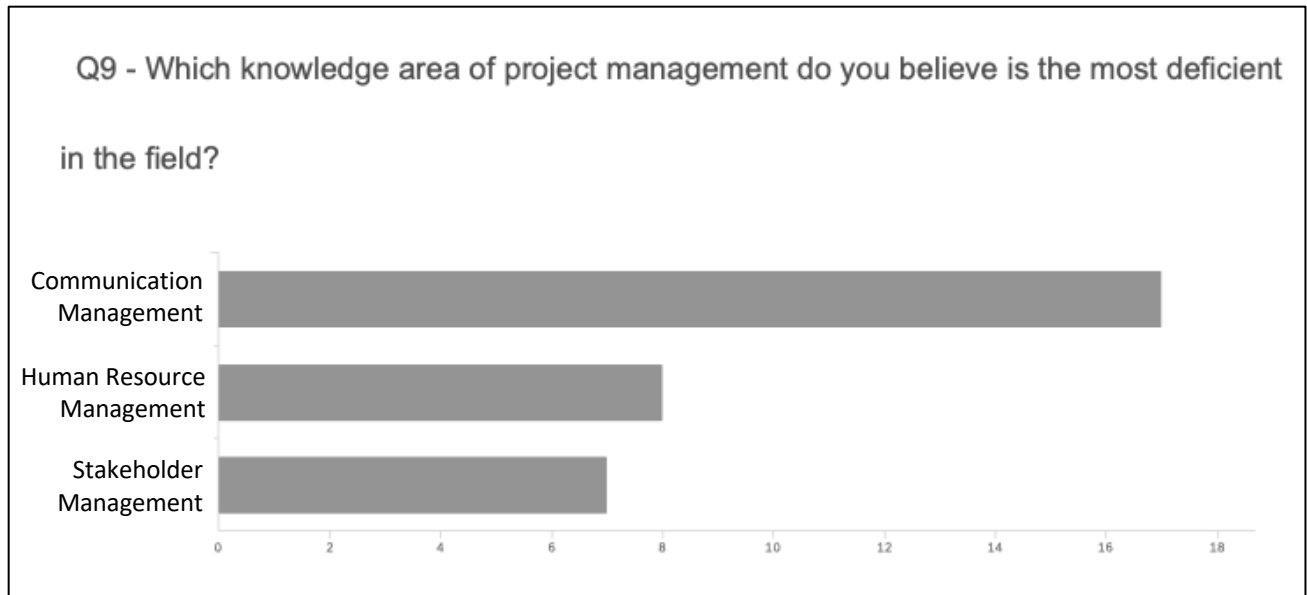


Exhibit 3 Survey Results for Most Deficient Knowledge Area

Additionally, the survey results revealed that resources and tools, such as reading and case studies, are the preferred and most frequently used tool for personal improvement. The survey did result in a previously unidentified critical requirement, which was the importance of qualitative (not just quantitative) analysis of self-improvement. The most popular analysis method being through the support of a sponsor or peer who would provide honest feedback. The optional *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* sponsor appointment and check-ins were born from this feedback.

Interviews

The interviews conducted with indirect project clients, MSPM professors, and subject matter experts revealed common themes in support of this project's hypothesis. Common themes identified in two or more interviews are as follows:

- Communication soft skills are often deficient and hard to measure academically.
- The MSPM program can improve on the incorporation of course strategy to improvement communication management (currently lacks this focus).

- Measurement strategy must be provided for improvement to be measurable and systematic.

These sentiments support the hypothesis that UAA MSPM students can benefit from a personal improvement plan with a soft skill focus.

Literature

The research and analysis of existing literature supported this project. According to the Project Management Institute, 90% of a project manager's time is spent communicating, making it a skill of utmost importance. This also supported this knowledge area remaining in scope.

Research of the seventh edition of PMBOK helped form the needs identification for this project and subsequently supported it in that the final product is beneficial because of the trend towards soft skills, requiring an emphasis on interpersonal leadership communication skills.

Interesting Findings

There was one interesting and potentially contradictory finding resulting from the survey that should be noted. According to results, the survey indicated that the majority, roughly 66%, of the sampled population believed that most project managers did **not** have adequate soft skills for the most effective project management. However, when asked about their personal soft skills, almost 95% responded with being confident in their own soft skills as a project manager. This contrast is shown in Exhibits 4 and 5 below.

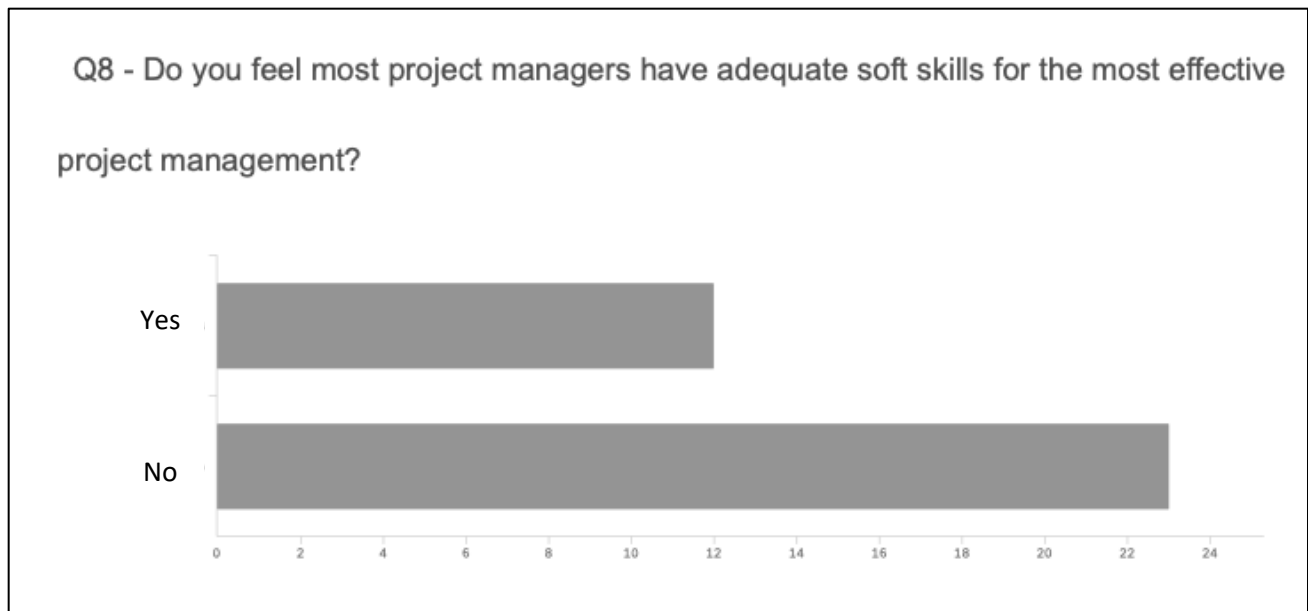


Exhibit 4 Survey Results for Most Project Managers Having Adequate Soft Skills

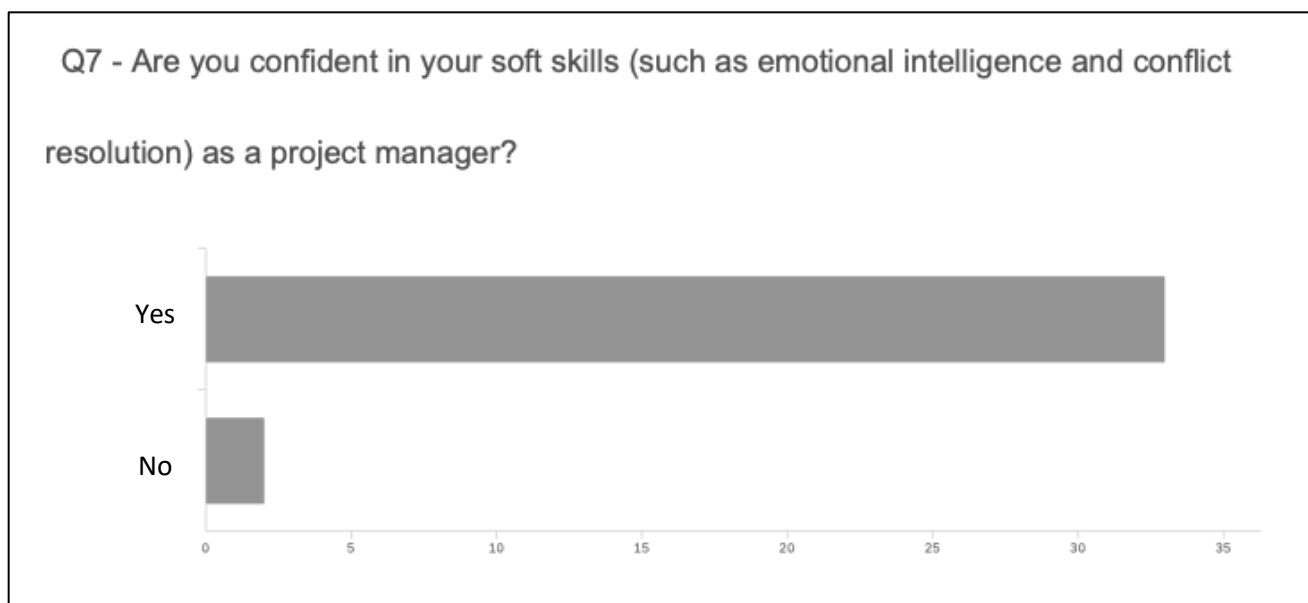


Exhibit 5 Survey Results for Confidence in Personal Soft Skills

A possible explanation for this finding is the cognitive bias of illusory superiority. An additional explanation could be that the sample population was taken from two areas where you find individuals who are actively working on their development in the area of project management, as a student or PMI volunteer, therefore resulting in higher confidence. This topic could use further exploration.

Conclusions

Evidence from this research and analysis supports the original hypothesis for this project. The University of Alaska Anchorage Master of Science in Project Management program, its students, as well as project managers in general, could benefit from more focus on the cultivation of the soft skills and emotional intelligence necessary to develop optimal leadership skills in the Project Management Body of Knowledge area of communication management. Further, the research and analysis conducted supports the initial needs identification for this project and final product.

Recommendations

Based on conclusions, it is recommended that UAA MSPM students further develop and use the *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* to cultivate the often deficient but highly important communication skills which do not receive a targeted focus in the program. It is further recommended that project managers in general use this improvement plan to develop their skillset and adapt to the new soft standard of project management in order to grow and thrive with the body of knowledge and industry.

Project Deliverables and Product

Product and Outcomes

This project produced a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* (see Appendix D). This product provides a systematic approach for developing communication skills in the form of a personalized and measurable improvement plan. This plan will focus on the emotional intelligence and soft skills associated with the PMBOK knowledge area of communication management. The plan takes the form of a guide and template, to be catered to individual project manager's needs. The guide will help the user identify skills which need further development, and the template will be used to build a plan and measure improvement.

The user is first directed to take one of two provided baseline personality assessments to identify areas in which their soft skills related to communication management are deficient. Based on these identified skill deficiencies, the user will select correlating resources and tools provided in

the guide for said skill cultivation. Using the selected tools and resources, as well as provided metrics measurement plan, the user will use the template to build their improvement plan based around their specific schedule and need.

The outcome of this product is a tool which contributes to the overall Project Management Body of Knowledge by providing project managers a guided, personalized approach to systematically developing their soft skills and emotional intelligence in this essential knowledge area on their own time and at their own pace in order to grow and thrive with the body of knowledge and industry.

Product Produced

As discussed, the original project scope included three knowledge areas from the Project Management Body of Knowledge to be addressed: communication, stakeholder, and human resource management. The final scope, following change request number one, included only the PMBOK knowledge area of communication management. Subsequently, only two personality baseline assessments related to communication soft skills were outlined and minimal related resources provided due to schedule and scope constraints (see Appendix D).

Flex of scope as well as quality of the final product, predicated upon the depth of assessments and resources and tools provided, was identified early on and monitored and controlled via the PMBOK knowledge areas chosen to demonstrate mastery for the UAA MSPM capstone course. Namely, quality, stakeholder, and scope management. Different tactics were employed throughout the life of the project to manage this reality, detailed below in Exhibit 6.

PMBOK Knowledge Area Measurement				
KA	Phase	Rationale	Measurement	Benefit
Communication Management	1	90% of a project manager's time is spent communicating, but this is often a deficient/undeveloped skill. A focus on communication will be essential to the	Bi-weekly collaboration with "major" project stakeholder with stated goal and time measurement	This will benefit the project by providing data regarding how effective the project communication plan is.

		success of this project and is a key component of the final product.		
Human Resource Management	1	This knowledge area requires developed soft skills, as it deals with human capital and people as resources. One of the fundamental Lean Six Sigma (improvement) characteristics is “people before product.” Additionally, this has become even more applicable in the current environment with the Corona Virus and therefore is a beneficial area of focus for this project.	Bi-weekly resource productivity (status) report measuring single resource’s PV and EV on assigned tasks (resource productivity report)	This will benefit the project by holding the single project resource accountable and evaluating their progress and productivity in order to revise schedule estimations and remain on track.
Stakeholder Management	1	Stakeholders are the reason a project exists, is executed, and delivered, and therefore is why project management is conducted. This knowledge area requires the developed people/soft skills that the final deliverable will focus on. Stakeholder requirements identification and satisfaction will be essential to the success of this project and is a key component of the final product.	Project faculty advisor satisfaction of 80% or above at each status brief in the form of a “grade”	This will benefit the project by measuring stakeholder satisfaction as the project progresses, incrementally ensuring a satisfactory end product.
Quality Management	2	The quality of the final product, a project manager personal improvement plan, will be a large focus in phase two, as it is where the majority of	Project faculty advisor satisfaction of 80% or above at each status brief in the form of a “grade”	This will benefit the project by measuring stakeholder satisfaction as the project progresses, incrementally ensuring a

		product execution will take place. Quality management is of utmost importance as mediocre deliverables could result in phase re-work.		satisfactory end product.
Time/Schedule Management	2	This knowledge area is essential to project success, as this is a schedule-constrained project. Time and schedule management is one of the most important areas of project management and is therefore beneficial as a focus.	Work performance index, or CPI, will be monitored and measured over the course of the project	This will benefit the project by keeping the schedule performance within a satisfactory range, a deviation of .50 on either side of the norm.
Scope Management	2	The scope of this project could flex based on the amount of time allotted to each activity and the opportunity of finishing them early or late. Improvement can be subjective and ambiguous. Therefore, the level and depth of the assessments, resources, and tools included in the final product will be essential to manage in phase two.	Project charter reviewed bi-weekly and revised if necessary, in alignment with authorized change management and process, measuring the amount of changes made	This will benefit the project by preventing scope creep or undocumented changes by incrementally reminding the project manager of the project's original scope and purpose.

Exhibit 6 PMBOK Knowledge Areas of Mastery

Opportunities and Future Development

The product of this project is a tool which is intended to be expanded upon. Future development of this *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* is encouraged and recommended. More specifically, the recommended future development is to expand the plan to include additional or all of the PMBOK knowledge area's related soft skills, especially stakeholder and human resource management. This expansion will require related baseline maturity assessments upon

which to measure improvement (such as Emotional Intelligence - EQ and Myers Briggs) and a repository of associated resources and tools for each skill. It is recommended that a more expansive and comprehensive repository of resources and tools which can be utilized for improvement be included. Resources and tools for all soft skill deficiency should be included for maximum range of useability.

It is important to assess the suitability, acceptability, and feasibility of the product after delivery to the client, the UAA College of Engineering MSPM program, and subsequently student end users or general project managers. This is out of scope for this project. Therefore, it is recommended that future development of the product account for adoption by MSPM students to assess suitability, acceptability, and feasibility, as well as the capturing of stakeholder feedback and development into critical requirements for continuous improvement. Adoption by students could be tracked by professors or by a download rate if the improvement plan is provided electronically. Stakeholder feedback could be captured via follow-up surveys and interviews. Actual improvement could be measured via the plans which are completed (requiring consent from the user). These are only recommendations for future development and continuous improvement which were intended but could not be accounted for in the scope of this project.

Project and Product Management

Requirements Formation and Traceability

The identified key themes detailed in the “Results and Key Supporting Themes” section were transformed into critical requirements for the final product, a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan*. Some were identified previously and further solidified by research and analysis. Other critical requirements were identified via the research and analysis and the requirements traceability matrix was subsequently updated.

Scope Management

The scope management plan detailed in this project’s project management plan (see Appendix B) is as follows:

“The scope of this project will be managed by the project manager and enhanced at their discretion, as scope has the potential to flex based on the level and depth of the baseline personality assessments and resources and tools included in the final product. Scope will follow the authorized project charter and project schedule. The scope of this project will be managed by faculty checkpoints and a bi-weekly charter review and revision process, detailed in the metrics management plan. This will benefit the project by preventing scope creep or undocumented changes by incrementally reminding the project manager of the project’s original scope and purpose. Any changes to scope must follow the provided change management plan and be approved by either the project manager and faculty advisor based on severity to prevent gold plating or significant scope creep, as scope is enhanced in this project.”

The original scope of this project was reduced with change request number one after risk realization of risk identification number three. This process is discussed in detail in the “Risk Management” and “Change Management” sections. The original scope statement for this project was as follows:

“This project will result in a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* which will provide a systematic approach for developing a measurable plan for improving soft skills in communication, human resource, and stakeholder management. This plan will include maturity baseline assessments and resources and tools to be catered to individual project manager’s deficient skill areas. Phase one of this project will include three project status briefs, a complete project management plan, and a final out-brief before execution of phase two, which will include three project status briefs, delivery of the *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* to the client, a final project report, and a final out-brief following project closure.”

Reduction in scope resulted in the following change to the scope statement:

“This project will result in a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* which will provide a systematic approach for developing a measurable plan for improving soft skills in communication, ~~human resource, and stakeholder~~ management. This plan will include maturity baseline assessments and resources and tools to be catered to individual project manager’s deficient skill areas. Phase one of this project will include three project status briefs, a complete

project management plan, and a final out-brief before execution of phase two, which will include three project status briefs, delivery of the *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* to the client, a final project report, and a final out-brief following project closure.”

Risk Management

The risk management plan detailed in this project’s project management plan (see Appendix B) is as follows:

“Risks and opportunities for this project will be estimated and managed by the project manager. The realization of either will be managed per the provided risk register. High associated risks and opportunities have been integrated as inactive tasks into the project schedule for analysis and monitoring.”

Risk realization and response implementation was recorded in the risk register (see Appendix B). Three risks were realized and required implementation of identified response measures. However, two risks were primarily active and monitored and controlled throughout the course of this project: risk identification number one, Insufficient KSAs – Exhibit 7, and risk identification number three, Single Project Resource – Exhibit 8.

Risk ID #1 Insufficient KSAs: the project's main resource is new to the field, this may result in significant rework.

ID#	Related WBS	Risk Name	Description of Risk	Likelihood (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Risk Level (L X I)	Positive or Negative	Realized Impact	Methodology	Owner
Internal Risks										
1	1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.3	Insufficient KSAs	The project's main resource is new to the field, this may result in significant rework	5	5	HIGH	Negative	Change management and rework, +12 hours work per phase	<u>Mitigate:</u> Conduct stakeholder meetings bi-weekly and monitor performance through faculty	Madeline Hogarth

									satisfaction scoring and feedback. Deliverable re-work has been built into project schedule via inactive tasks (see related WBS)	
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Exhibit 7 Risk ID #1

Implementation Realized: utilized 6/12 hours of contingent rework built into project schedule in phase one. Utilized only three hours of contingent rework built into project schedule in phase two. Three buffer hours remained at project close. This buffer proved sufficient and preliminary risk and analysis accurate.

Risk ID #3: Single Project Resource: the project relies on a single resource, increasing schedule risk.

ID#	Related WBS	Risk Name	Description of Risk	Likelihood (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Risk Level (L X I)	Positive or Negative	Realized Impact	Methodology	Owner
Internal Risks										
3	1.4.4-1.4.9, 2.4.4-2.4.9	Single Project Resource	The project relies on a single resource, increasing schedule risk	3	4	MED	Negative	Project work increase for close monitoring, +1.8 hours per phase	Accept: No other resources are available to this project. Resource will be monitored closely through resource productivity reports bi-weekly	Madeline Hogarth

Exhibit 8 Risk ID #3

Implementation Realized: resulted in change request number one to reduce scope and avoid impact to project schedule and product quality as much as possible. No contingent work hours built into the project schedule were utilized in phase one. Utilized 2.2/3.6 hours of contingent work built into the project schedule in phase two. 1.4 buffer hours remained at project close. This buffer proved sufficient and risk and analysis accurate (given reduction of scope).

These two primary risks were identified early on in project initiating and planning, and potential realized impact as well as methodology to respond carefully recorded. However, due to an unanticipated risk, risk identification number three required more monitoring and controlling than initially anticipated. In order to manage the realized impact to schedule, the scope of the project was reduced. With this reduction in scope, the risk was successfully managed within the outlined impact buffer built into the project schedule.

Change Management

The change management plan detailed in this project's project management plan (Appendix B) is as follows:

“Changes to this project must follow the following change request process (displayed in Exhibit 9) and be submitted using the provided change request form. Major project changes will only be implemented if approved by both the project manager and a faculty advisor via DocuSign; minor changes will only be implemented if approved by the project manager. All changes will be populated in the provided change log (Appendix B).

Major Change: directly impacts project charter information (discretion of PM)

Minor Change: does not directly impact project charter information (discretion of PM)”

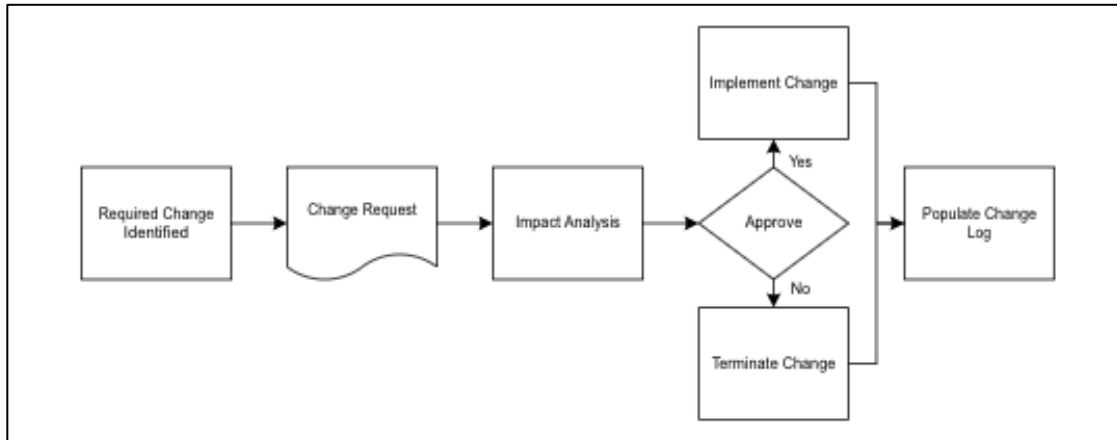


Exhibit 9 Change Management Process from PMP

Two change requests were submitted, approved, and implemented over the course of the project:

Project Change Request 1 (Major – Approved/Implemented): reduce scope to only include the PMBOK knowledge area of communication management (removing stakeholder and human resource management from scope). Proposed scope statement changes: this project will result in a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* which will provide a systematic approach for developing a measurable plan for improving soft skills in communication, ~~human resource, and stakeholder~~ management. This plan will include maturity baseline assessments, resources, and tools to be catered to individual project manager's deficient skill areas. Phase one of this project will include three project status briefs, a complete project management plan, and a final out-brief before execution of phase two, which will include three project status briefs, delivery of the *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* to the client, a final project report, and a final out-brief following project closure.

Project Change Request 2 (Minor – No Approval Necessary/Implemented): change Project Close Performance Report to be included in the final out-brief presentation instead of as a separate report and deliverable.

The change management plan for this project was revised in phase two of the project after direction from the primary faculty advisor to include the distinguishment between minor and major project changes and their required approval. This amendment gave the project manager the

autonomy to make minor changes without going through the proposal and DocuSign approval process. This was favorable, especially because of this project's schedule constraint and single resource risks. The change management plan proved clear and effective for this project.

Deliverable Satisfaction

All project deliverables were satisfied based upon the outlined core deliverables and revised scope:

“This project will result in a *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* which will provide a systematic approach for developing a measurable plan for improving soft skills in communication management. This plan will include maturity baseline assessments, resources, and tools to be catered to individual project manager's deficient skill areas. Phase one of this project will include three project status briefs, a complete project management plan, and a final out-brief before execution of phase two, which will include three project status briefs, delivery of the *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* to the client, a final project report, and a final out-brief following project closure.”

A complete project management plan was provided at the close of phase one, along with final out-brief. The final product was delivered to the client in phase two and final out-brief given. The final product included two maturity baseline assessments as well as numerous resources and tools for the related communication management skills areas. The guide and template provide a systematic approach for improvement and measurement (Appendix D). All six project status briefs were given, and final project report delivered. Project schedule summary task and deliverable satisfaction is outlined in the table below – Exhibit 10.

Deliverables	Deliverable	Target Date	Status	Percent Complete
	Project Management Plan	Summary Task – 11/18/2020	Complete	100%
	Project Management	Summary Task – Reoccurring (04/29/2021)	Complete	100%

	Project Report	Summary Task – 04/10/2021	Complete	100%
	Research and Analysis	Summary Task – 02/10/2021	Complete	100%
	Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan	Summary Task – 04/29/2021	Complete	100%

Exhibit 10 Project Summary Task/Deliverable Completion

Personal Experience and Growth

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned for this project was broken out into two separate lessons learned logs which were populated throughout phase one of the project (PM 686A) and phase two of the project (PM 686B). Phase one focuses on the project management process groups of initiating and planning and phase two focuses on executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing. The predominant identifiers of lessons were the primary faculty advisor, LuAnn Piccard and the project manager. The project manager owned all of the lessons learned and subsequent corrective action. The primary mode of collecting lessons learned came in the form of reviewing faculty advisor feedback following PPM or milestone submissions and requesting “areas of improvement” as part of each of the primary faculty advisor meetings.

Initiating and Planning

The primary source of lessons learned associated with phase one and the initiating and planning of this project was a risk identified early on in the project’s risk analysis and registration, “Insufficient KSAs.” This risk accounted for 100% of root cause lessons learned recorded in initiating and planning. “Insufficient KSAs” was identified and planned for, as the risk had a high likelihood, level, and impact.

The lessons learned gathered throughout initiating and planning were largely consistent with phase one reflecting a capstone course (PM 686A), where the student (project manager) is new to the field and tasked with demonstrating their mastery of the subject matter while continuing to learn and receive feedback from faculty and advisors.

Executing, Monitoring and Controlling, and Closing

The primary source of lessons learned associated with phase two and the executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing of this project was a risk identified early on in the project's risk analysis and registration: "Single Project Resource." This risk accounted for 70% of root cause lessons learned recorded in executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing.

The lessons learned gathered throughout executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing were largely consistent with warning and recommendations given by faculty advisors regarding scope and single project resource constraints. The opportunity to apply formal project management in the UAA MSPM capstone provided valuable application of toolsets and skills in a coachable environment. I categorize my extensive lessons learned in producing a valuable product as a success.


Bibliography

- Discenza, R. (2007). *Seven Causes of Project Failure*. Retrieved from Project Management Institute Learning Library: <https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/seven-causes-project-failure-initiate-recovery-7195#:~:text=Projects%20most%20commonly%20fail%20because,the%20organizations%20key%20strategic%20practices.>
- Education Edge . (2020). *Introducing the new PMBOK Guide – 7th Edition*. Retrieved from Education Edge: <https://www.educationedge.ca/introducing-the-new-pmbok-guide-7th-edition/>
- Lynch, C. (2020). *PMBOK Guide 7th Edition - Dawn of a New Era? Project Management Institute*. Alaska, United States: Project Management Institute.
- Master of Project Academy. (n.d.). *PMBOK 7th Edition – Coming in 2021 – What is Changing?* Retrieved from Master of Project Academy - PMP: <https://blog.masterofproject.com/pmbok-7th-edition/>

Appendices

Appendix A – Research and Analysis Approval

Research and Analysis Approval



LuAnn Piccard

to me

8:36 AM (0 minutes ago)

☆

↶

⋮

Hi Madeline,

I approve your research data and analysis for PPM #2 PM 686B.

Regards,

LuAnn


Thank you!

Thank you so much!

Great!

↶ Reply

↷ Forward



LuAnn Piccard <lpiccard2@alaska.edu>

to me, Roger

Thu, Oct 29, 2020, 7:19 PM

★

↶

⋮

Hi Madeline,

You have my **approval** for your **research** methods and anticipated approach to **analysis** that will be used next semester in PM 686B. Will review your survey more closely and provide feedback prior to you sending it out after the conclusion of PM 686A.

Regards,

LuAnn

--

Very Respectfully,

LuAnn Piccard, PMP
Associate Professor and Department Chair
Project Management
College of Engineering
University of Alaska Anchorage
Engineering and Industry Building (EIB) 301X
2900 Spirit Way (Physical Address)
3211 Providence Drive (Mailing Address)
Anchorage, AK 99508
Office: 907-786-1917
Cell: 970-443-1917 (Colorado Area Code)

Appendix B – PMP Excerpts

PMP Excerpts



Scope Management Plan (PMP Excerpt):
Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan

Scope Management Plan

Flexibility Matrix

Flexibility Matrix	Scope	Enhance
	Schedule	Constrain
	Cost	Accept

The scope of this project will be managed by the project manager and enhanced at their discretion, as scope has the potential to flex based on the level and depth of the baseline personality assessments and resources and tools included in the final product. Scope will follow the authorized project charter and project schedule. The scope of this project will be managed by faculty checkpoints and a bi-weekly charter review and revision process, detailed in the metrics management plan. This will benefit the project by preventing scope creep or undocumented changes by incrementally reminding the project manager of the project's original scope and purpose. Any changes to scope must follow the provided change management plan and be approved by either the project manager and a faculty advisor based on severity to prevent gold plating or significant scope creep, as scope is enhanced in this project.

Requirements Management Plan

The requirements of this project will be managed through the formation of an advisory committee of experts and research and analysis of an array of project stakeholders. Members of the advisory committee will provide requirements and meet with the project manager on a regular basis to ensure satisfaction of these requirements. Stakeholder research subjects will be identified, and their requirements analyzed through surveys and interviews. This data will be compiled and integrated into the WBS to be managed and satisfied by the project manager.

Requirements Traceability Matrix (see Appendix C)



UAA College of Engineering
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Risk Management Plan (PMP Excerpt):
Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan

Risk Management Plan

Risks and opportunities for this project will be estimated and managed by the project manager. The realization of either will be managed per the provided risk register. High associated risks and opportunities have been integrated as inactive tasks into the project schedule for analysis and monitoring. See the attached risk register and schedule for more detail on this project's risk analysis.

Risk Register
[\(see Appendix C\)](#)

[illegible]

Requirements Traceability Matrix							
Associated WBS	Requirement Description	Source	Stakeholder ID	Organization	Justification/Need	Task	Status
Internal Requirements							
1 78.81.8.1	Skill training	James Bates	9	UMI Consulting	Baseline to be included in product	Input Baseline	In Progress
2 90	Online access	Student	5 and 6	UAA MSP program	Editable, online version of product will be delivered to client	Deliver Product to Client	Not Started
3 77.80.8.3	PHDOX Knowledge Keel Focus	Faculty Advisers	1 and 2	UAA MSP program	The plan will focus on a PHDOX knowledge area	Communication Management	In Progress
4 74	Personalization	Faculty Advisers	10 and 7	UAA MSP program	The guid section of the product will detail how to personate the plan	Write Guide	Not Started
5 2.6.1	Improvement Tools/Techniques	Survey Result/Interviews	4 and 7, 1 and 6	UAA MSP program/PMI AK	Resources and tools section for selection	Search for Resources and Tools	In Progress
6 2.7.3	Feedback: sponsor/peer/mentor	Survey Results	4 and 7	UAA MSP program/PMI AK Chapter	Sponsor of plan encouraged/checked built into suggested schedule	Write Guide	In Progress
7 2.7.3	Progress Measurement Strategy	Survey Result/Interviews	4 and 7, 1, 2 and 6	UAA MSP program/PMI AK Chapter	Baseline to be taken before and after execution of improvement plan. Metrics section included for improvement plan	Write Guide	Complete
8 2.7.4	Quantifiable improvement	Survey Result/Interviews	5 and 7, 1, 2 and 6	UAA MSP program/PMI AK Chapter	Baseline to be taken before and after execution of improvement plan. Metrics section included for comparison/measurable improvement	Write Guide	Complete
External Requirements							
9 75	Citation	Student Code of Conduct IIR	3	UAA Academic Integrity Committee	Citation section to be included in product appendix	Create Appendix	In Progress
10 2.7.1	Sound Theory	Interviews	1 and 2	UAA MSP program	Data driven methodology is essential to buy in an Abstract	Write Abstract	Complete



Change Management Plan (PMP Excerpt): Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan

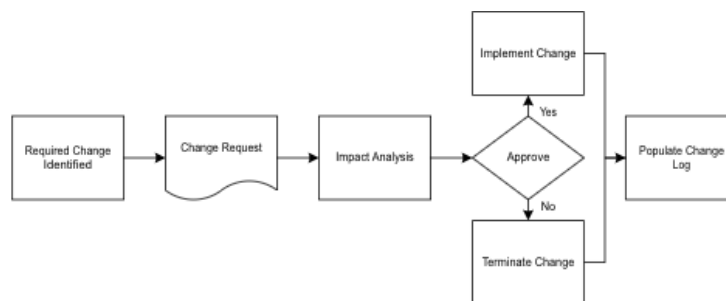
Change Management Plan

Changes to this project must follow the following change request process and be submitted using the following attached change request form. Major project changes will only be implemented if approved by both the project manager and a faculty advisor via DocuSign; minor changes will only be implemented if approved by the project manager. All changes will be populated in the attached change log.

Major Change: directly impacts project charter information (discretion of PM)

Minor Change: does not directly impact project charter information (discretion of PM)

Change Request Process



Change Request Form

Project Change Request			
Project Information			
Project	Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan	Project Manager	Madeline Hogarth
Percent Complete		Project Faculty Advisors	LuAnn Piccard (primary) and Roger Hull
Project Sponsor	Jim Bates	Client	The UAA College of Engineering MSPM Department
Project Change		Change #	
Requestor		Date Prepared	

Madeline Hogarth

1

PM686B: Spring 2021



UAA College of Engineering
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Change Management Plan (PMP Excerpt):
Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan

Change Description		
Change		
Justification for Change		
Rationale		
Impact to Project Constraints		
Flexibility Matrix	Scope: Enhance	
	Schedule: Constrain	
	Cost: Accept	
Additional Notes		
Change Approval		
Primary Project Faculty Advisor	Signature:	
	Printed name:	
	Date:	
Project Manager	Signature:	
	Printed name:	
	Date:	

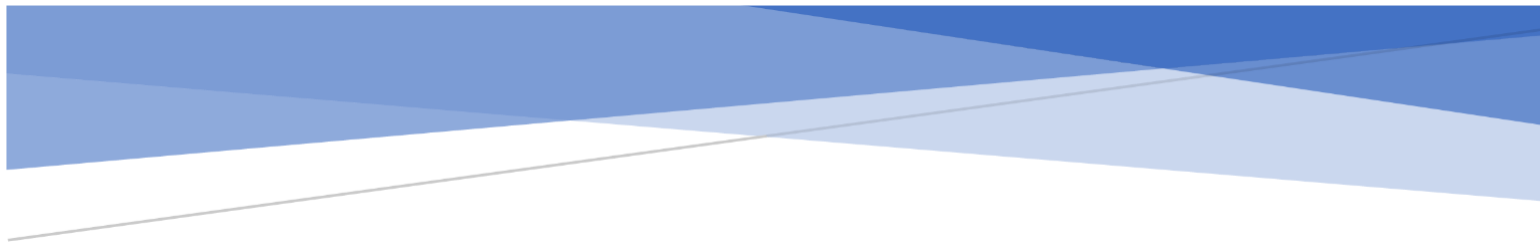
Madeline Hogarth

1

PM686B: Spring 2021

Appendix C – Research and Analysis Data/Results

Research and Analysis Data/Results



Survey Link

Copy and paste this link into your browser to access the survey preview:

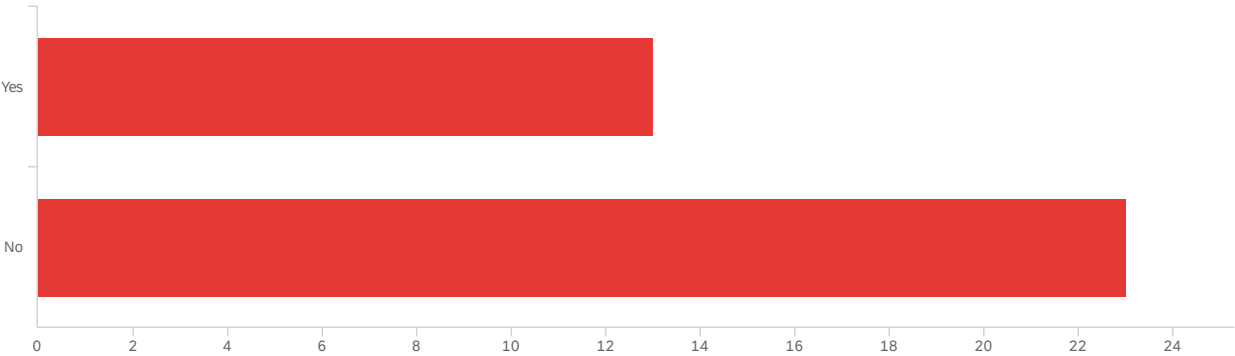
https://uaa.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_82ZWTfGJf6gfTkV?Q_CHL=preview&Q_SurveyVersionID=current

Default Report

PM 686

February 5, 2021 2:23 PM MST

Q1 - Are you a current or graduate student of the University of Alaska Anchorage College of Engineering Master of Science in Project Management (MSPM) program?



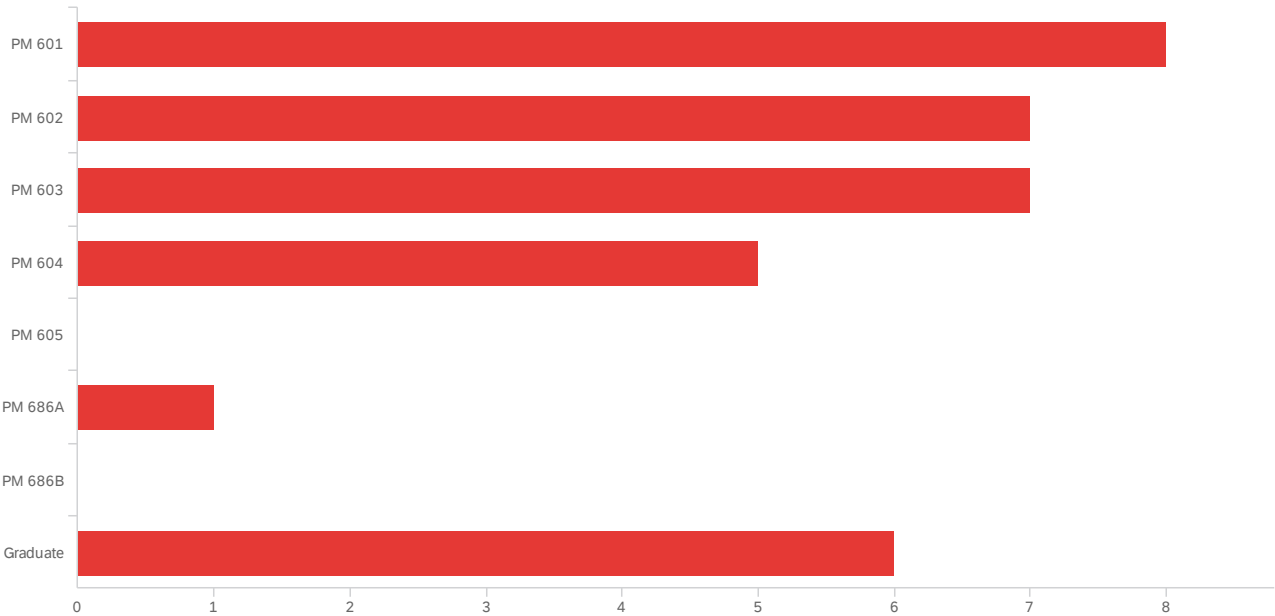
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Are you a current or graduate student of the University of Alaska Anchorage College of Engineering Master of Science in Project Management (MSPM) program?	1.00	2.00	1.64	0.48	0.23	36

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	36.11% 13
2	No	63.89% 23

36

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q5 - Which core classes have you completed or are currently enrolled in the program?



#	Field	Choice Count
1	PM 601	23.53% 8
2	PM 602	20.59% 7
3	PM 603	20.59% 7
4	PM 604	14.71% 5
5	PM 605	0.00% 0
6	PM 686A	2.94% 1
7	PM 686B	0.00% 0
8	Graduate	17.65% 6

Q2 - What is your current position/affiliation with project management?

What is your current position/affiliation with project management?

PM

Program Manager, PMP

PMP

Project Manager, PMP

Project Manager, PMP

Over site of multiple projects as a Vice President

PMP

Project Manager

Project Manager

Career

I am a PMP and have managed projects for 15 years. I am currently managing a team of PMs

Project Manager / Sr. Mgr Operations

Project Controls

Project Manager

IT project manager, PMP and ACP

resource manager/member

Project Engineer

Assistant Professor of Project Management, UAA

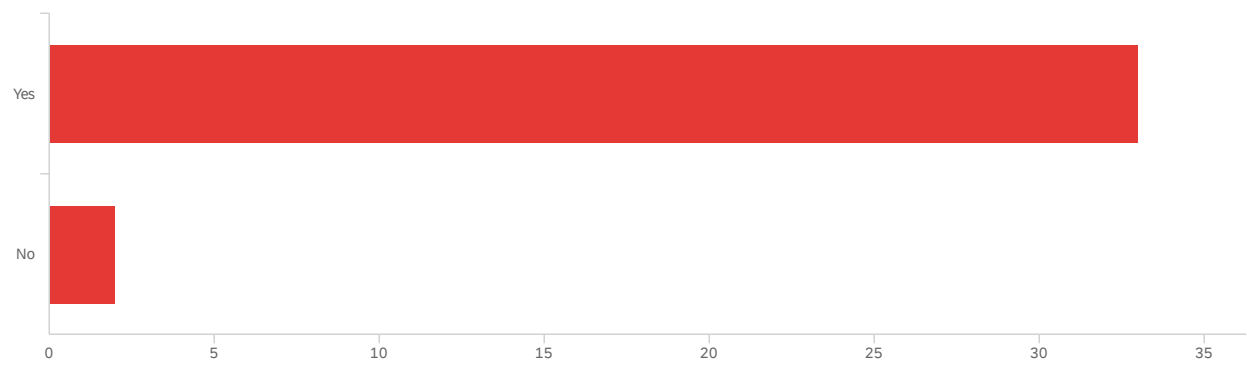
Retired

Employed in the field

PMIAK Board member

PMP

Q7 - Are you confident in your soft skills (such as emotional intelligence and conflict resolution) as a project manager?



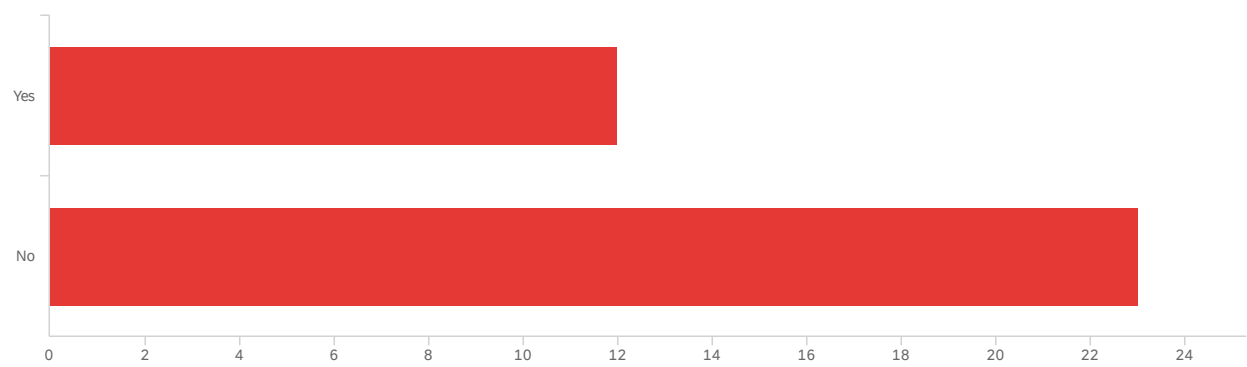
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Are you confident in your soft skills (such as emotional intelligence and conflict resolution) as a project manager?	1.00	2.00	1.06	0.23	0.05	35

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	94.29% 33
2	No	5.71% 2

35

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q8 - Do you feel most project managers have adequate soft skills for the most effective project management?



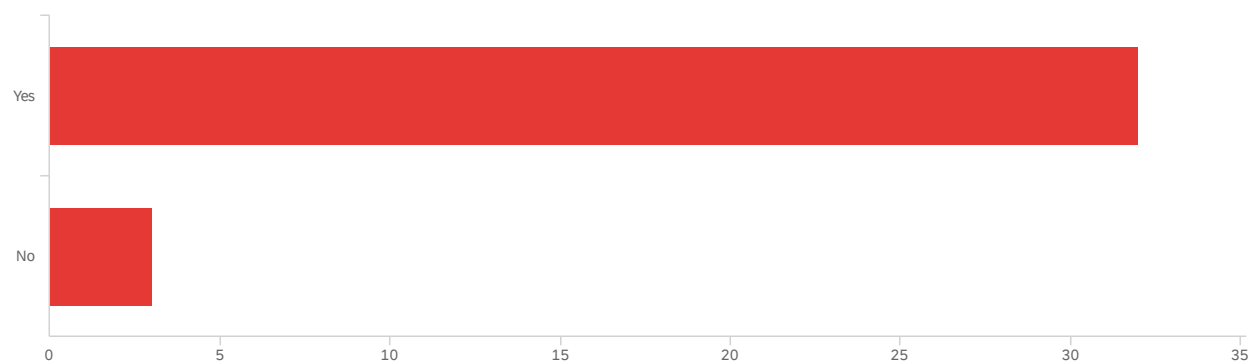
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel most project managers have adequate soft skills for the most effective project management?	1.00	2.00	1.66	0.47	0.23	35

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	34.29% 12
2	No	65.71% 23

35

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q17 - Do you currently work on self-improvement?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you currently work on self-improvement?	1.00	2.00	1.09	0.28	0.08	35

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	91.43% 32
2	No	8.57% 3

35

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q18 - How do you currently assess your weaknesses and measure progress?

How do you currently assess your weaknesses and measure progress?

Varies

360 feedback

Peer feedback and investing in classes and books for improvement. I assess improvement through feedback from peers and self assessment exercises

Feedback from employees/supervisor

I ask my mentor. I evaluate what could have gone better in critical situations

No

Feedback from others; Issues with employees

continuously consider lessons learned from what worked well, and what did not

Client feedback

ask for feedback from peers and superiors.

Reflect on behavior and impact; consider alternative approaches to gain desired response/response from team member

Gathering feedback from my peers and mentors

through evaluation

Internal/External Assessments

Feedback from staff, peers, boss - SMART objectives and metrics

lack of knowledge, measure classes and tests

Through formal performance reviews, mentor sessions, and personal self assessment as compared to peers.

360 feedback assessments

Nothing formal. Anecdotal conversation.

Self-improvement Plan with baselines, milestones, and metrics

Self Reflection and ask

Feedback

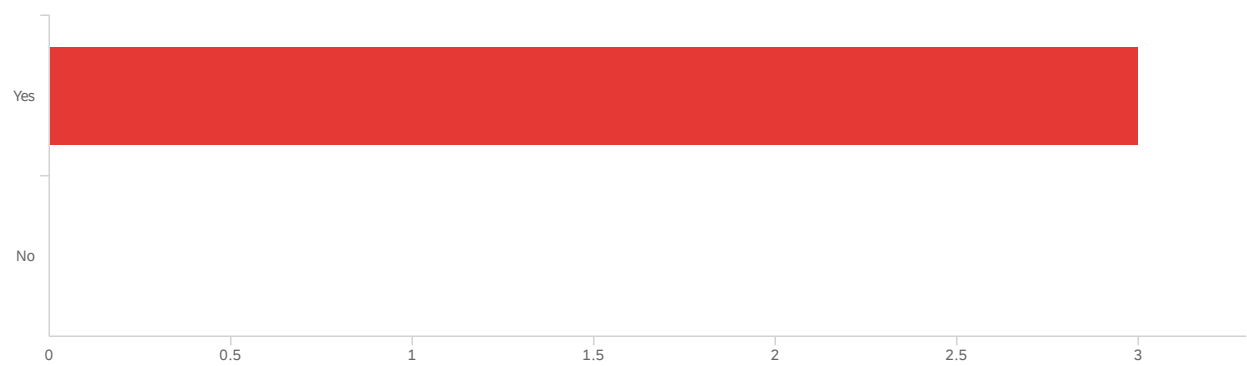
How do you currently assess your weaknesses and measure progress?

I don't break down my weaknesses but I do measure progress with a simple excel spreadsheet.

Through lessons learned in current career.

Scheduled critical reviews with supervisors

Q19 - Do you see value in a self-improvement plan?



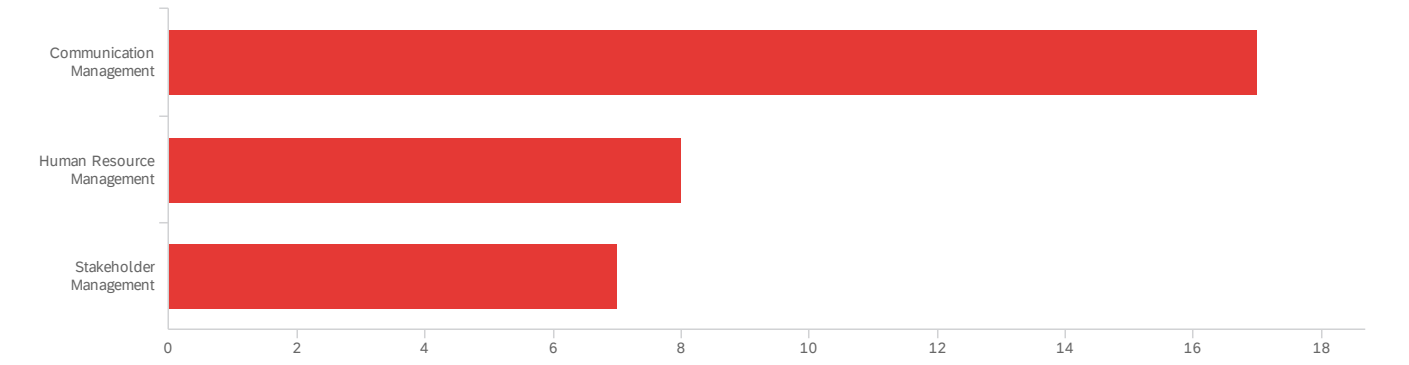
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you see value in a self-improvement plan?	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	3

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	100.00% 3
2	No	0.00% 0

3

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q9 - Which knowledge area of project management do you believe is the most deficient in the field?

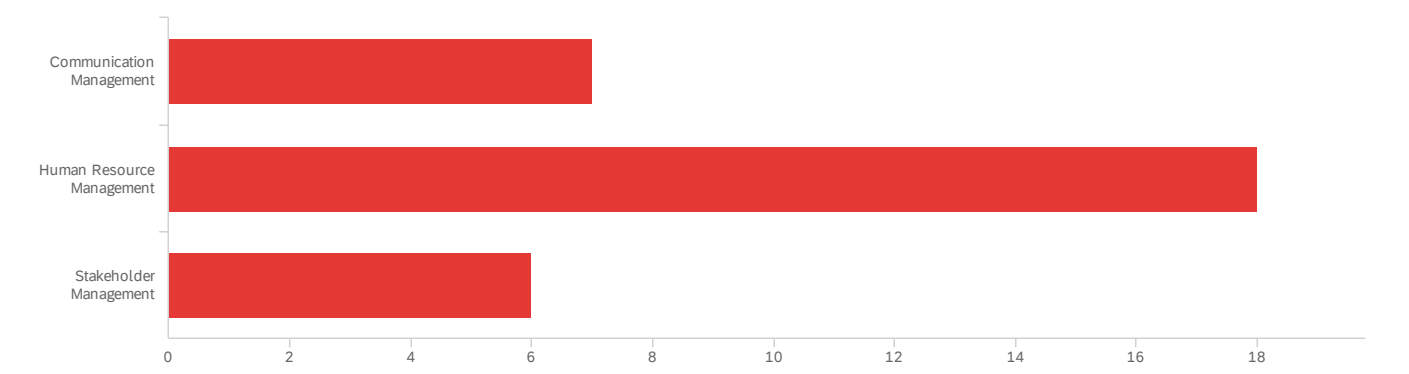


#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Which knowledge area of project management do you believe is the most deficient in the field?	1.00	3.00	1.69	0.81	0.65	32

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Communication Management	53.13% 17
2	Human Resource Management	25.00% 8
3	Stakeholder Management	21.88% 7
		32

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

Q10 - Which knowledge area of project management do you believe is most deficient for you personally?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Which knowledge area of project management do you believe is most deficient for you personally?	1.00	3.00	1.97	0.65	0.42	31

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Communication Management	22.58% 7
2	Human Resource Management	58.06% 18
3	Stakeholder Management	19.35% 6
		31

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

Q14 - In terms of engaging with stakeholders, resourcing, and communicating with project teams, what are your greatest challenges?

In terms of engaging with stakeholders, resourcing, and communicating with...

Many organizations have silos

Adjusting approach to best match stakeholders, people

Project sponsor that micro manages the project process and requirements from the team

Virtual meetings and management of team members currently working from home is a current challenge.

communicating

Long emails or meetings that could be completed in a different format much more efficiently

Balancing the resources workload

Getting stakeholders to communicate with each other and ensure they are on the same page.

Understanding the nuisances of who really understands what is going on politically based on how things are discussed

Time. Time to learn what the team and the other key stakeholders really value and want form the project, what their challenges are so that that information can be incorporated into plans and communications and resource management.

Bureaucrats

finding resources who are not overbooked on multiple projects

Having adequate team to support you on Project tasks so that the time necessary for effective communication can be allocated

Communication

People's availability

Time

Outreach & learning who is a stakeholder (not always obvious)

having enough time to plan to thoroughly execute

Currently the greatest challenge is performance management of project team members and stakeholders remotely. Expediting and encouraging participation is more difficult as remote work has required more email and messaging type communications.

time, effort, external factors

In terms of engaging with stakeholders, resourcing, and communicating with...

Keeping all involved.

Dealing with slower methodical thinkers

virtual meetings

Budgeting communications

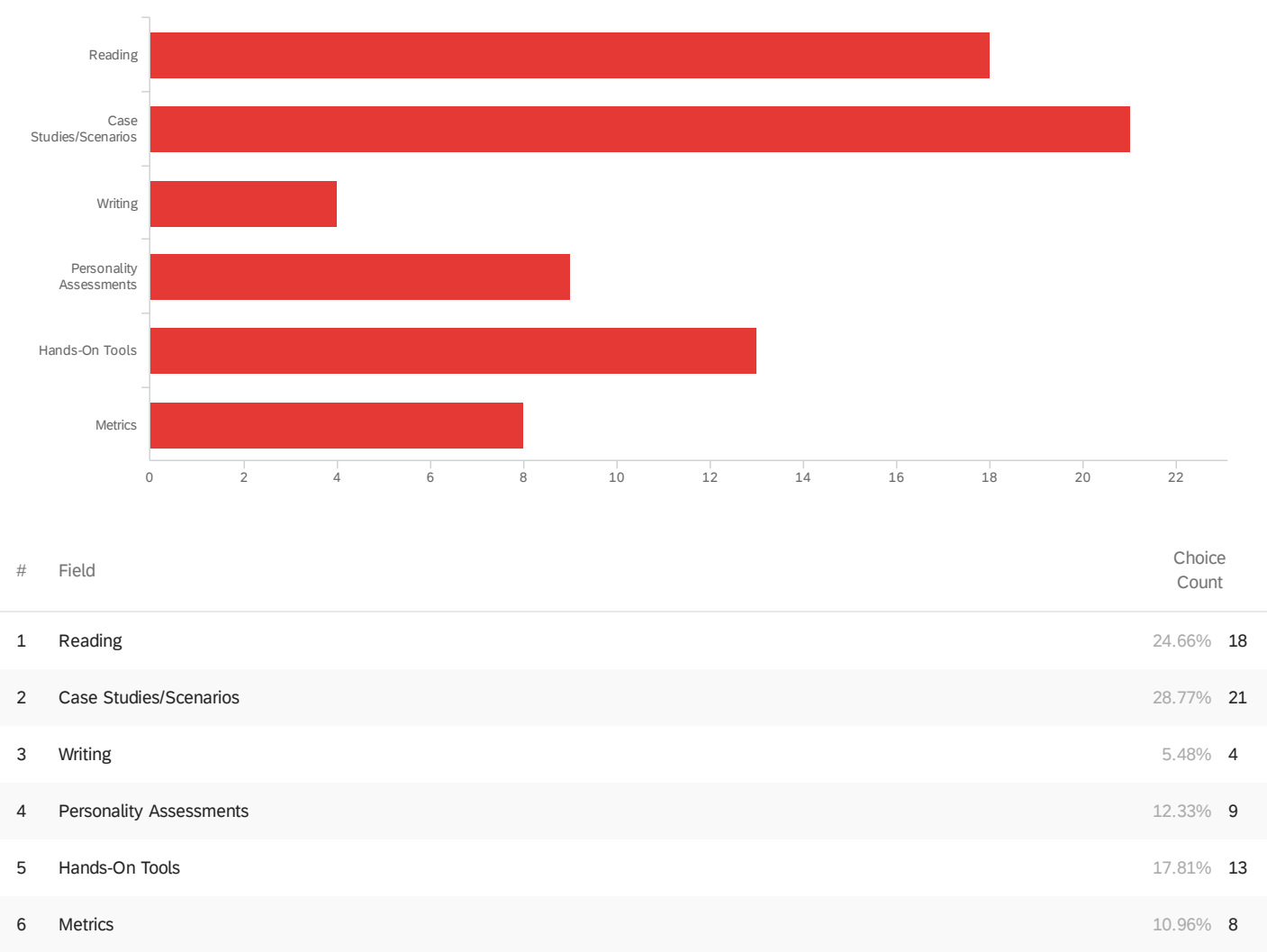
Getting buy-in from leadership.

Managing expectations, speaking up when i have questions, asking for raises or additional work

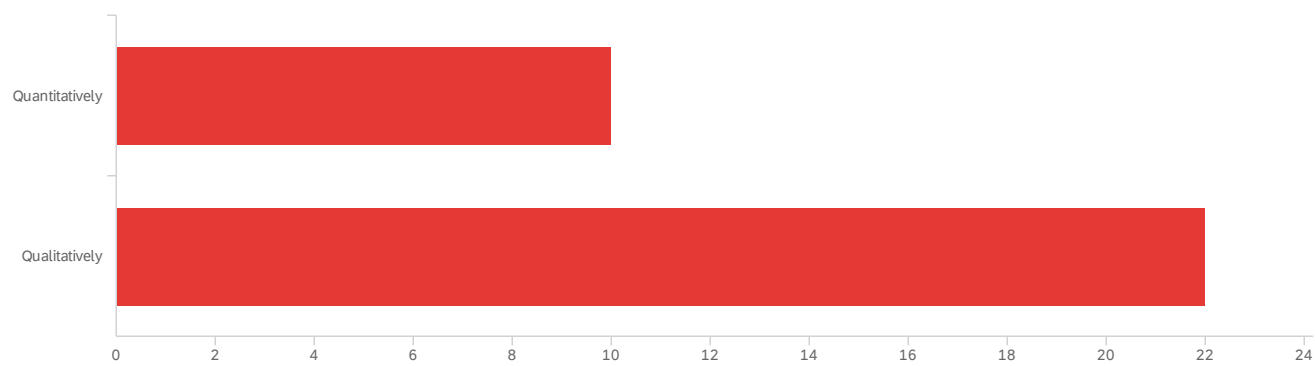
Being assertive in a professional way.

Currently - working around COVID 19 limitations, communication across different cultural norms

Q11 - To develop your soft skills for project management, which tools would you MOST likely use? (please select three)



Q13 - How do you MOST like to measure your personal improvement?



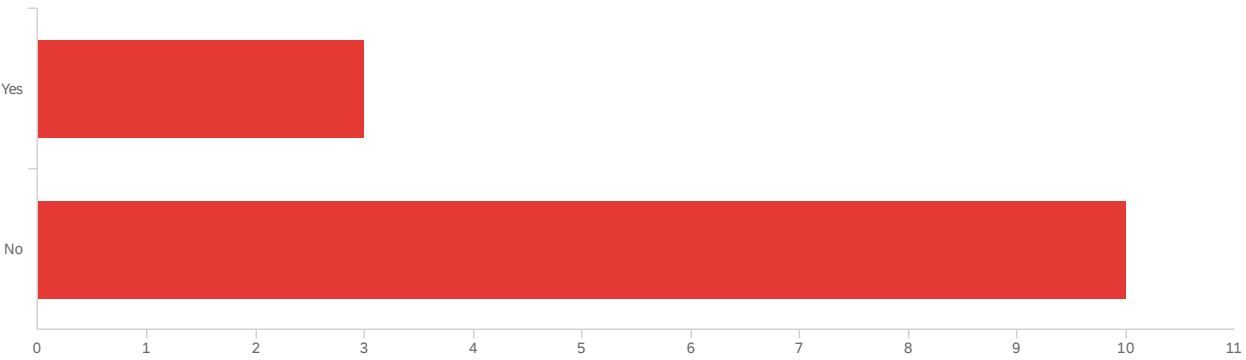
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How do you MOST like to measure your personal improvement?	1.00	2.00	1.69	0.46	0.21	32

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Quantitatively	31.25% 10
2	Qualitatively	68.75% 22

32

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q3 - Do you feel that the UAA MSPM program lacks a sufficient focus on the soft skills necessary for the most effective project management?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Do you feel that the UAA MSPM program lacks a sufficient focus on the soft skills necessary for the most effective project management?	1.00	2.00	1.77	0.42	0.18	13

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	23.08% 3
2	No	76.92% 10

13

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q12 - What would be your critical requirements, as an end-user, for a personal soft-skill improvement plan?

What would be your critical requirements, as an end-user, for a personal so...

Benchmarking and peer review

Feedback from stakeholder/team members on how my messaging is recieved

Assessment of current state, targeted training based on assessment, real life situation applications, follow up

increased emotional intelligence

Identify deficiencies, identifying specific ways to improve, evaluate improvement

Active Listening

number of tools to use with the ability to use

case study examples, continuous improvement, stakeholders and project team members that would be enthusiastic to work on another project with me

must include practice

Tailored to the individual on how they best learn.

unknown

Quantified feedback from colleagues

Assessment metrics, evidence of real-world applicability, realistic role play scenarios

work one-on-one w/mentor, role play scenarios

Not sure I understand the question. But, a method to identify strengths and weaknesses and measure improvement over time.

Measuable

Leadership inventory, conflict styles, team player fit, active listening, EQ

unsure

Mentoring

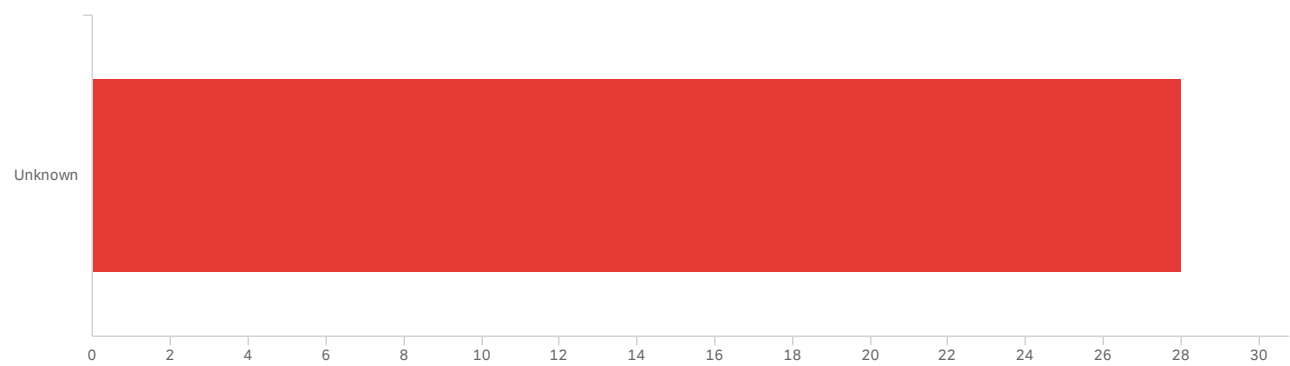
Other than lessons learned, have a personal assessment on project managers by members of the team to aid in becoming a more effective PM. The assessment needs to be anonymous so teammates feel safe in being truthful.

What would be your critical requirements, as an end-user, for a personal so...

Notable instances of improvement in required improvement areas

NA

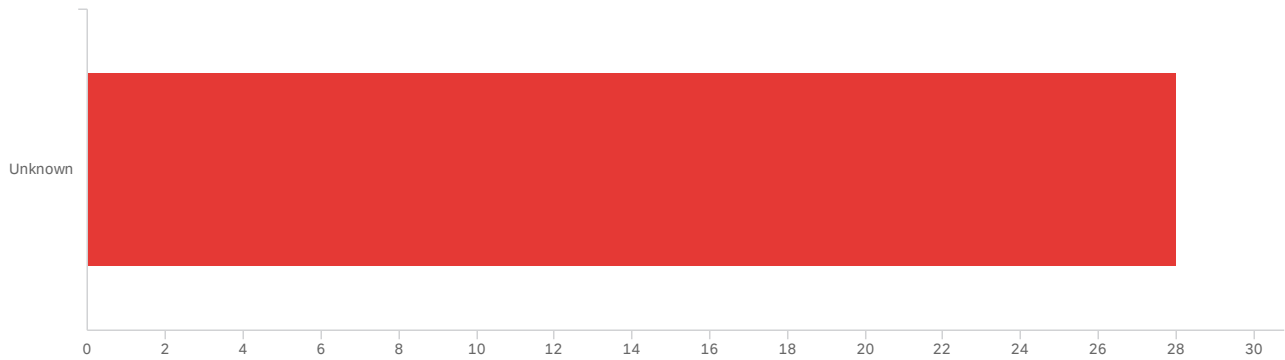
Q14 - Topics



#	Field	Choice Count
Unknown	Unknown	100.00% 28

Showing rows 1 - 1 of 1

Q14 - Parent Topics



#	Field	Choice Count
Unknown	Unknown	100.00% 28

Showing rows 1 - 1 of 1

End of Report



High-Level Interview Results – Key Supporting Themes

- Communication soft skills are often deficient and hard to measure.
- The MSPM program can improve on the incorporation of course strategy to improvement communication management (currently lacks a sufficient focus).
- Measurement strategy must be provided for improvement to be measurable and systematic.
- Sound theory of communication soft-skills contribution to more effective project management must be present.

Interview Results

1. As an MSPM professor, where do you see students lacking most when it comes to the PMBOK knowledge area of communication management?

LuAnn Piccard

- confidently represent project status/reporting
- ability to empathetically listen and elicit/understand what stakeholders need (tailored to specific audience)
- being persuasive/moving

Roger Hull

- PM 602 – progress report, status report, meeting agenda, ground rules – PM project communications, fully understanding and delivering purpose of communication (status report)
- Solid audience analysis and catering to that
- Tool: falling forward / audience analysis

Jim Bates

- Understanding communication in terms of the greater body of knowledge referenced and implied by the PMBOK. i.e. how to recognize and communicate with different personality styles.
- More development around a student's communication strengths and weaknesses and how to assess them.



2. As an MSPM professor, where do you see deficiencies in the MSPM program when it comes to cultivating sufficient soft skills related to communication (management)? In other words, what shortfalls are not currently being addressed (related to communication soft skills)?

LuAnn Piccard

- not required electives
- PM 601/602 presentations - continue to practice, practice, practice!
- difficult to measure leadership/persuasion/communication
- instructional opportunities for conflict resolution within team / productive escalation
- how to teach/practice/receive feedback

Roger Hull

- PM 602 hw – extended through rest of courses

Jim Bates

- Having not been a student in the program, my input is subjective and includes a biased perspective based entirely on observation and interaction with students over the past 8+ years. As referenced in my answers to Question 1, I would suggest incorporating a way to assess and baseline soft skills and provide focused instruction on how to improve and develop these important project management success factors. The Communication Knowledge Area can have overlaps with Stakeholder Management (Engagement). Project Integration Management is the knowledge area that glues the entire PM lifecycle together and has been analogized as a conductor directing a symphony. What is implied here is Leadership! In the PMI talent triangle, the Leadership and Strategic focus should be developed and emphasized in a more meaningful way.
 - Examples include:
 - i. Leadership profiles – DiSC,
 - ii. Personality – Myers Briggs
 - iii. Team profiles – TEAM, Berke
 - iv. Emotional Intelligence Quotient – EQ
 - v. Conflict Management – TKI
 - vi. Negotiation Management

3. As a project manager/Project Management Professional, how have you improved your communication management over time?

LuAnn Piccard

- just doing it/overcoming fear of group and sharing (toastmaster)
- just practice and receive constructive feedback on effectiveness



- build confidence
- seize opportunities and seek feedback
- observation

Roger Hull

- Recognition/buy-in of communication management importance as a team
- Knowledge of end-users/go to the Gemba/UNDERSTAND

Jim Bates

- By using the tools described above to assess and baseline my personality style, strengths and weaknesses in my EQ, managing conflict, negotiating, and leading and inspiring people
- I then develop a personal development (improvement) plan to set goals and measure progress in becoming more balanced and mature in all areas of leadership and communication
- Periodically re-baseline and develop a personal culture of continual improvement

4. What do you see as the greatest challenges to effective communication management for project managers?

LuAnn Piccard

- tailor information to specific audience (stakeholder groups)
- being fluent in different forms of communication
- establishing regular communication cadence
- empathy to connect understand and influence to move
- appreciate inquiry (empathy, power-interest matrix)
- communicate virtually

Roger Hull

- Empathy, care, paying attention
- True understanding of communication model (why and how we doing it)
- Checking if the communication is actually working/audience is understanding

Jim Bates

- Understanding that communication is multifaceted and complex and requires a holistic set of tools and skills to achieve the best levels of success
- Having ways to access coaching, mentoring, and other instruction on how to develop these skills in congruence with gaining work experience



- Having a clearly laid out methodical way of using outputs from the above to improve and mature

5. As an MSPM professor (and indirect client of this project), what critical requirements do you have for the final deliverable - a Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan (designed to help students cultivate their soft skills in communication management)?

LuAnn Piccard

- baseline
- fosters reflection
- tools/path to get better
- get to "better"
- based in sound theory
- measurable (include sponsor feedback b4 and after?)

Roger Hull

- Solid explanation for why this pmpip is important. More than to just improve communication (data. Research, better communication = better project management, successful project... soft skills effect on pm)

Jim Bates

- I would like to see a comprehensive approach to PM soft skill assessment, baselines, and realistic incremental maturity and improvement via a PDP.
- That being said, I believe that you should manage scope to realistic deliverables for your timeline – time being the least flexible constraint.
- I would include out-of-scope areas for future development of your deliverable that shows the bigger-picture view of what it could be

Appendix D – Final Project Deliverable

Final Project Deliverable

PROJECT MANAGER PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

*A systematic approach for developing a measurable plan for improving soft skills in
the knowledge area of communication management*



Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan

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Summary

The development of soft skills associated with the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) area of communication management is essential to effective project management and is difficult to completely develop and assess in an academic environment, such as The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Master of Science in Project Management (MSPM) program. This *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* provides a systematic approach for developing a measurable plan catered to individual project manager's deficient skill areas related to communication management. Research and analysis of key stakeholders reinforced the value of this *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* (Hogarth, 2021). It is recommended that UAA MSPM students use this plan to develop these often deficient but highly important skills which do not receive a targeted focus in the program.

The guide directs the user to take one of two communication maturity baseline assessments, predicated upon the soft skills they are most interested in improving. After establishing this baseline, the user selects improvement resources and tools catered to one or two of the (most deficient) assessed skills. The template acts as a prompt to create a plan for improving the chosen skills using the chosen resources and tools in a systematic and measurable manner, customizable to the user's needs. When ready (subject to personalized plan), the user will retake the communication maturity baseline assessment and be directed to measure their progress via the template.



Value

According to the Project Management Institute (PMI), 90% of a project manager's time is spent communicating, making it a skill of utmost importance (Sivasankari, 2010). This is especially true as project management trends towards a softer standard and Agile, reflected in the seventh and most recent edition of the PMBOK, which identifies project managers as "servant leaders," requiring an emphasis on such interpersonal leadership communication skills (Master of Project Academy, n.d.).

A survey of UAA's MSPM students as well as members of the local PMI Alaska Chapter, revealed that 66% do not feel most project managers have adequate soft skills for effective project management, and communication management was identified as the most deficient knowledge area in the field. Of these stakeholders, 100% found value in self-improvement plans and 90% actively worked on self-improvement, supporting the needs identification and value of this *Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan* (Hogarth, 2021).

Guide

In order to measure communication management improvement, a baseline must be established; take one of the two communication maturity baseline assessments outlined below to establish a maturity baseline upon which to improve. These baselines are a tool to help the user objectively identify their soft skill deficiencies in the knowledge area of communication management. The assessment chosen should be predicated upon the communication skills targeted and their relation to the user's interest area of improvement.

TKI:

"The TKI® is an assessment that determines how you tend to respond to conflict (when your needs differ from those of another person), and what other conflict-handling options are available to you. It takes about 20 minutes to complete and there are no right or wrong answers (The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, n.d.)!"

Communication Skills Targeted:

- Collaborating
- Competing
- Avoiding
- Accommodating
- Compromising



Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan

Link

<https://theassessmentsite.com/>

DiSC:

“DiSC® is a personal assessment tool used by more than one million people every year to help improve teamwork, communication, and productivity in the workplace (DiSC Profile, n.d.).”

Communication Skills Targeted:

- Dominance
- Influence
- Consciousness
- Steadiness

Link

<https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc>

Once the assessment baseline has been taken, identify which one or two skills to focus on improving, considering which was identified as the most deficient. Subsequently, see the corresponding resources below for the skill(s) chosen to improve. Select one or two improvement tools or resources to include in your plan. If a tool of the user’s preference or area of need is not provided, they are encouraged to search for their own (adding it to the list of resources) and use it in the plan. In the template, you will find a section to list your resources and/or tool and plan to use it.

Resources and Tools

Collaborating

- READ: PMI Conference Paper by Diana Mekelburg:
<https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/conflict-collaboration-beyond-project-success-1899>
- COURSE: Cultivating Creative Collaboration:
<https://www.ideou.com/products/cultivating-creative-collaboration>
- READ: Six Tactics To Improve Collaboration For Remote Teams:
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/353806>
- TOOL: Mural:
https://www.mural.co/start-now/free-trial?utm_medium=paid-search&utm_source=adwords&utm_campaign=201101-



Core_Brand&utm_adgroup=MURAL_-
_Branded&utm_campaign_id=11265145092&utm_content=mural&utm_adgroupid=109
231331743&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0caCBhCIARIsAGAfUmyAaQ8dzNLK8nWDIVABP63-
jny4apgSQEbg7hJCfAN_O03PpRpMNUwaAq7EEALw_wcB

Competing

- READ/PRACTICE: 18 Ways to Deal with Competition in the Workplace:
<https://www.careeraddict.com/workplace-competition>

Avoiding

- LISTEN: Addressing Avoidance: <https://player.whooshkaa.com/episode?id=669699>
- TOOL: Avoidance and Escape Worksheets:
<https://www.psychologytools.com/professional/mechanisms/avoidance/>

Accommodating

- TOOL: Power Tool: Assertive vs. Accommodating: <https://coachcampus.com/coach-portfolios/power-tools/tara-chrisco-assertive-accommodating/>
- READ/PRACTICE: Are You 'Accommodating' or Are You Just Making Excuses for People?:
<https://medium.com/love-and-other-things/are-you-accommodating-or-are-you-just-making-excuses-for-people-1ad6d3cec9d0>

Compromising

- READ: Cooperation or Capitulation? How Personality Types View Compromise:
<https://www.16personalities.com/articles/cooperation-or-capitulation-how-personality-types-view-compromise>

Dominance

- WATCH: Dealing with Dominant Personalities:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ko0wCfWvHgc>
- WATCH/READ: Dealing with "Tanks." How to Deal with Difficult and Toxic People:
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/4-types-difficult-people-how-deal-vanessa-van-edwards/>

Influence

- READ: Magic Words: The Science and Secrets Behind Seven Words That Motivate, Engage, and Influence, by Tim David:
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/20893503-magic-words>



- READ/PRACTICE: Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, by Robert B. Cialdini, Ph.D.: <https://www.amazon.com/Influence-Psychology-Persuasion-Robert-Cialdini/dp/006124189X>
- READ: How To Get People To Do Stuff: Master the Art and Science of Persuasion and Motivation, by Susan M. Weinschenk, Ph.D.: <http://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/9780321884503/samplepages/0321884507.pdf>

Consciousness


- READ: Developing Magical Consciousness: A Theoretical and Practical Guide for the Expansion of Perception, by Susan Greenwood: <https://www.routledge.com/Developing-Magical-Consciousness-A-Theoretical-and-Practical-Guide-for/Greenwood/p/book/9781138078697>
- COURSE: Developing Consciousness: A Roadmap of the Journey to Enlightenment, by Nicholas Vesey: <https://www.amazon.com/Developing-Consciousness-Roadmap-Journey-Enlightenment-ebook/dp/B005BRJWJC>

Steadiness

- READ/PRACTICE: Emotional Agility: Get Unstuck, Embrace Change, and Thrive in Work and Life, by Susan David: https://www.audible.com/pd/Emotional-Agility-Audiobook/B01JGRB5JM?source_code=GPAGBSH0508140001&ipRedirectOverride=true&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0caCBhCIARIsAGAFuMwulliWgSNqQgVkJHTaYlkhosgY2k4VpfBRY41bAd0wePaFQCB6mOkcaAmiHEALw_wcB&gclidsrc=aw.ds

Template

Follow the prompts provided in the plan below to build your own personal improvement plan and measurement using the identified skillset and associated resources and tools.

Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan	
Plan Information	<i>This section contains high-level information about the plan for the user and sponsor to refer back to. Report status here for sponsor check-ins.</i>
	this icon indicates a recommended sponsor check-in



Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan

Plan	Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan	Percent Complete	Click here to enter text.		
User	Click here to enter text.	Start Date	Click here to enter text.		
Sponsor <i>The sponsor is recommended to be a MSPM faculty member and someone the user trusts to provide meaningful feedback at check-ins.</i> ✓	Click here to enter text.	End Date	Click here to enter text.		
Communication Skill(s) Selected for Improvement	Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text.	Status	Click here to enter text.		
Baseline Information <i>Use this section to log baseline information and establish a goal.</i>					
Baseline Taken	<input type="checkbox"/> TKI <input type="checkbox"/> DiSC				
Skillset(s) Selected for Improvement	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.			
Associated Resources Chosen ✓	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.			
	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.			
Goal Statement <i>The goal statement should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-based.</i> ✓	Click here to enter text.				
Schedule <i>Create a schedule to employ the selected resources. Baseline tasks and sponsor check-ins have been recommended; the user should take the liberty to adjust based on their personal goal and schedule.</i>					
WBS	Resource	Task	Target Date	Sponsor Check-In	
	Baselining and Execution – Phase I				
	PMPIP Guide	Choose Baseline		No	
	TKI/DiSC	Take Baseline		No	
	PMPIP Template – Metrics	Log Metrics		Yes ✓	
	PMPIP Guide	Choose Resources		Yes ✓	
	PMPIP Template – Baseline Information	Write Goal Statement		Yes ✓	


Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan

	PMPIP Template – Schedule	Create Schedule		No
	Click here to enter text.			
	Click here to enter text.			
	Click here to enter text.			
	Click here to enter text.			
	Click here to enter text.			
	Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text.			
	Post-Baselining and Continuous Improvement – Phase II			
	TKI/DISC	Re-Take Baseline		No
PMPIP Template	Log Metrics		No	
PMPIP Template	Measure Improvement		Yes ✓	
PMPIP Template	Log Lessons Learned		Yes ✓	
PMPIP Template	Next Steps		Yes ✓	
Metrics <i>This section aids in measuring improvement. Log your original assessment metrics under “Baseline” and post-execution assessment metrics under “Post-Execution.” Subsequently, measure change and quantify improvement!</i>				
Measurement	Skillset	Baseline	Post-Execution	Measurable Change
		✓		✓
	Click here to enter text.			
	Click here to enter text.			
Closeout <i>Use this section to reflect upon your improvement as well as the feasibility and suitability of this Project Manager Personal Improvement Plan. Establish next steps for continuous improvement.</i>				



Moving Forward	
Lessons Learned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
	Click here to enter text.
	Click here to enter text.
Next Steps <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.
	Click here to enter text.
	Click here to enter text.
Signatures of Support	
Sponsor Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Printed name:
	Signature:
	Date:
Individual Support	Printed name:
	Signature:
	Date:

Conclusion

This personal improvement plan was designed to help UAA MSPM students improve their soft skills in communication management on their own time and schedule, as it is often hard to measure in an academic environment. It is recommended students provide feedback to faculty on this plan for possible future development.



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